

## CLAIMS

1. A method for delivering electronic messages, comprising:  
5 receiving from a message sender a request for a delay report;  
determining an expected delay for delivery of an electronic message; and  
sending a delay report to the message sender, wherein the delay report includes  
information on the length of the expected delay.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the request for a delay report is a delay  
query.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the request for a delay report is a  
subscription request.
- 15 4. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the expected delay includes  
measuring an actual delay time for the delivery of a test message.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the expected delay is determined at least  
20 in part from the number of messages queued at a message gateway.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the message gateway is a bulk message  
gateway.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the delay report sent to the message sender is one of a plurality of delay reports sent periodically to the sender.

5 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining that the expected delay has fallen below a threshold delay, wherein the delay report is sent in response to the determination that the expected delay has fallen below the threshold delay.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the delay report is sent in response to a  
10 delay query from the message sender.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the delay report includes the length of the expected delay.

15 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the delay report indicates whether the expected delay exceeds a threshold delay.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic message is a short message service message.

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13. The method of claim 1, wherein the delay report is a session initiation protocol message.

14. A message delivery method, comprising:  
determining whether an expected delay for delivery of an electronic message is  
less than a threshold delay; and  
sending the electronic message only after determining that the expected delay is  
5 less than the threshold delay.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising creating the electronic  
message only after determining that the expected delay is less than the threshold delay.

10 16. The method of claim 14, wherein determining whether the expected delay  
is less than a threshold delay includes sending a delay query.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein determining whether the expected delay  
is less than a threshold delay includes receiving a delay report.

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18. The method of claim 17, wherein the delay report indicates whether the  
expected delay exceeds a threshold delay.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the delay report indicates whether the  
20 expected delay exceeds a threshold delay.

20. The method of claim 14, wherein determining whether the expected delay  
exceeds a threshold delay includes:

receiving a delay report that indicates the length of the expected delay; and  
comparing the expected delay to the threshold delay.

21. The method of claim 14, wherein the electronic message is a short  
5 message service message.

22. The method of claim 14, wherein the expected delay is the expected delay  
for delivery of an electronic message by a bulk message gateway; and  
sending the message includes sending the message to the bulk message gateway.

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23. A delay manager comprising:  
a delay estimator operative to determine an expected delay for delivery of an  
electronic message;  
a report generator operative to generate a delay report including information on  
15 the expected delay; and  
a network interface operative to send the delay report to a message sender.

24. The delay manager of claim 23, further comprising subscriber data storage  
that identifies message senders that subscribe to receive delay reports;  
20 wherein the report generator is operative to generate delay reports for subscribing  
message senders.

25. The delay manager of claim 23, wherein the report generator is operative to determine when the expected delay falls below a threshold delay; and

the report generator is further operative to generate a delay report in response to the expected delay falling below the threshold delay.

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26. The delay manager of claim 23, wherein the delay estimator determines the expected delay based at least in part on the number of messages queued at a message gateway.

10 27. The delay manager of claim 23 incorporated in a bulk message gateway.

28. A system for managing the delivery of electronic messages comprising:  
a network interface;  
a processor; and

15 a computer memory;

wherein the computer memory stores instructions executable on the computer memory and operative (i) to receive from a message sender over the network interface a request for a delay report, (ii) to determine an expected delay for the delivery of an electronic message; and (iii) to send to a delay report to the message sender over the  
20 network interface, wherein the delay report includes information on the length of the expected delay.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein the executable instructions include instructions to determine the expected delay at least in part based on the number of messages queued at a message gateway.

5 30. A message delivery method, comprising:  
receiving a delay query including an electronic message;  
determining whether an expected delay for delivery of the electronic message is less than a threshold delay; and  
sending the electronic message only after determining that the expected delay is  
10 less than the threshold delay.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the delay query includes the threshold delay.